

## THE YOG OF THE SUPREME BEING

Accomplished sages have striven to explain the nature of the world by various analogies. While some have described it as the forest of worldly life, others have represented it as the ocean of mortal existence. In a different context the same has been called the river or abyss of worldly life. Sometimes it has also been compared to the hoof of a cow. Apparently they all imply that the extension of the world is only so much as that of the senses. And the stage at last comes when even this fearsome “ocean” dries up. In the words of Goswami Tulsidas, the mere naming of God dries up this ocean. Yogeshwar Krishn, too, has used “ocean” and “tree” as epithets for the world. He has said in the sixth and seventh verses of Chapter 12 that he soon delivers his loving devotees, who contemplate him-the manifest God-with firm concentration, from the gulf of the mortal world. In the present chapter he declares that the world is a tree which yogi who are seeking for the supreme goal have to cut down.

1. **“The Lord said, ‘He who knows the Peepal (Fig) tree that the world is, with its roots above and branches below and which is said to be imperishable, and of which Vedic verses are the foliage, is a knower of the Ved.’”**

The root of this everlasting Peepal-like world is the God above and its boughs are the nature below. A tree does not even last till

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श्रीभगवानुवाचः ऊर्ध्वमूलमधः शाखमश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययम् ।  
छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥१॥

the symbolic tomorrow, but the tree of the world is indestructible. Two things are immortal according to Krishn. The first of these is the everlasting world and then beyond it there is the eternal Supreme Spirit. The Ved are said to be the leaves of this tree of the world. The man who observes this tree well along with its root and is aware of its reality is an adept in the knowledge of Ved.

The man who has perceived the truth of the world-tree rather than one who has merely perused holy books, is a true knower of the Ved. Study of books only provides a motive for proceeding in that direction. It may well be asked at this point why the Ved are needed instead of leaves. Vedic verses, which generate well-being, are useful because they motivate from the very point when after a great deal of wandering about a Soul goes through his last birth which is like the final shoot of a tree. This is the turning point where the straying ceases and the seeker begins to proceed confidently towards God.

**2. “Its branches nourished by the three properties extend high and low, objects of the senses are its shoots, and its action-engendering roots stretch below to the world of men.”**

The boughs of sense-objects and their enjoyment, nourished and cultivated by the three properties, of the treelike world spread everywhere above and below, even going back into the earth and sprouting new shoots. They extend from the worms and insects below to the godly state and creator above, but they can bind only those who are born as men according to their past actions. All other births are only for the enjoyment of sense-objects; only human birth is subject to bondage in keeping with action. And-

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अधश्चोर्ध्वं प्रसृतास्तस्यशाखा गुणप्रवृद्धा विषयप्रवालाः ॥  
अधश्च मूलान्यनुसंततानि कर्मानुबन्धीनि मनुष्यलोके ॥२॥

3. **“Since its form is not to be seen here as such and it has neither an end nor a beginning, nor a secure foundation, this immensely-grown tree should be cut down with the axe of renunciation.”**

The world-tree does not have a firm existence because it is changeable. So it has to be felled with the axe of total abandonment. It has to be cut down, not worshipped as it usually is because of the superstitious assumption that God resides in the roots of this tree and that its leaves are the Ved.

However, since this tree has grown from God's own seed, can it be cut down? In fact, the meaning of this cutting down is escape from nature which is accomplished by renunciation. But what is to be done after the tree has been cut down?

4. **“Then that goal should be sought for, after arriving at which one does not have to turn back again, with a sense of total submission to that primal God whence all worldly life is born.”**

But how to effect the quest for this God? The Yogeshwar lays down that self-surrender is an essential condition for it. There should be the feeling that “I am at the mercy of God”—the Infinite Being from whom the primordial world-tree has sprouted and grown. This tree cannot be cut down without seeking shelter under him. Krishn then speaks about the signs from which one may realize that the tree has been cut down.

5. **“Men of knowledge who are free from vanity and delusion, victorious against the evil of infatuation, ever-abiding in the Supreme Spirit, totally devoid of desire, and liberated from the contradictions of joy and grief, achieve the eternal goal.”**

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न रूपमस्येह तथोपलभ्यते नान्तो न चादिर्न च संप्रतिष्ठा ।  
अश्वत्थमेनं सुविरूढमूलमसङ्गशस्त्रेण दृढेन छित्त्वा ॥३॥  
ततः पदं तत्परिमार्गित्वयं यस्मिन्नाता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः ।  
तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये यतः प्रवृत्तिं प्रसृता पुराणी ॥४॥  
निर्मानमोहा जितसङ्गदोषा अध्यात्मनित्या विनिवृत्तकामाः ।  
ब्रह्मैर्विमुक्ताः सुखदुःखसंज्ञैर्गच्छन्त्यमूढाः पदमव्ययं तत् ॥५॥

The destruction of vanity, delusion, infatuation, desire and of the contradictions of pleasure and pain is possible only by complete self-surrender to and abiding constantly in God. Only through this do men of true wisdom attain to the eternal state. The world-tree cannot be severed without this attainment and renunciation is needed up to this point. Now what is the form of that ultimate state which is achieved by renunciation?

**6. “That after reaching which there is no return, and which is illumined by neither the sun nor the moon, nor by fire, is my supreme abode.”**

After this ultimate home has once been reached, there is no rebirth. And everyone has an equal right to it.

**7. “The immortal Soul in the body is a part of mine and it is he who attracts the five senses and the sixth-the mind-that dwell in nature.”**

Krishn now explains how it is so:

**8. “Like the wind carrying a scent from its source, the Soul that is lord of the body also bears along with him the senses and the mind from its previous body and assumes a new one.”**

The Soul carries with him the propensities and mode of action of the mind and five senses of the body from which he departs and takes them into his new body. The next body is immediately assured and that is why Krishn asked Arjun earlier how he had happened to be a victim of the misconception that the departed Souls of ancestors would fall from heaven in the absence of obsequial rice-cakes and water-libation offerings. However, the immediate question is what the Soul does after going into a new body and what truly are the five senses along with the mind?

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न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः ।  
यद्गत्वा न विर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥६॥  
ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।  
मनषष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ॥७॥  
शरीरं यदवाप्नोति यच्चाप्युत्क्रामतीश्वरः ।  
गृहीत्वैतानि संयाति वायुर्गन्धानिवाशयात् ॥८॥

9. **“Governing the senses of hearing, sight, touch, taste, smell and also the mind, he (the Soul) experiences objects through them.”**

But it is not seen to be so and everyone is not able to see it.

10. **“The ignorant are unaware of the Soul, endowed with the three properties and departing from the body or dwelling in it and enjoying objects; only they who have eyes of wisdom discern him.”**

So naturally the next verse is on how to secure this vision.

11. **“Yogi know the essence of the Soul dwelling in their heart, but the unknowing who have not purified themselves (of evils) fail to see him even after much endeavour.”**

By restraining their minds from all directions and through earnest endeavour yogi perceive their Soul. But men with an unaccomplished Soul, that is, with unclean mind and heart, fail to see him even though they strive for it. This is because their mind and sense organs are impure. Only by making a strenuous effort to subdue their mind are sages enabled to apprehend their Self. So contemplation is a necessity. Krishn now throws light upon the glories of the Self of realized sages, which have also been dwelt upon earlier.

12. **“Know that the radiance of the sun that lights up the world, and of the moon and fire, is my own effulgence.”**

Next he points out the sage’s task:

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श्रोतं चक्षु स्पर्शनं च रसनं घ्राणमेव च ।  
अधिष्ठाय मनश्चायं विषयानुपसेवते ॥९॥  
उत्क्रामन्तं स्थितं वापि भुञ्जानं वा गुणान्वितम् ।  
विमूढा नानुपश्यन्ति पश्यन्ति ज्ञानचक्षुषः ॥१०॥  
यतन्तो योगिनश्चैनं पश्यन्त्यात्मन्यवस्थितम्  
यतन्तोऽप्यकृतात्मानो नैनं पश्यन्त्यचेतसः ॥११॥  
यदादित्यगतं तेजो जगद्भासयतेऽखिलम् ।  
यच्चन्द्रमसि यच्चाग्नौ तत्तेजो विद्धि मामकम् ॥१२॥

13. “Permeating the earth, I support all beings with my radical energy and like the ambrosial moon, I provide the sap that nourishes all plants.”

And-

14. “I am the fire, possessed of pran and apan, within the body of all living beings that consumes the four kinds of food.<sup>1</sup>”

In Chapter 4, Krishn referred to various kinds of fire-of knowledge (verses 19 and 37), of God (verse 25), of restraint (verse 26), of the senses (verse 26), of yog (verse 27), and of pran-apan (verses 29-30); and the resultant from all of them was said to be knowledge. Knowledge itself is fire. Assuming the form of such fire, it is Krishn who accepts and assimilates the food generated by the four modes of recitation, namely, baikhari, madhyama, pashyanti, and para that are endowed with pran and apan (it will be remembered that recitation is always by means of inhaled and exhaled breath).<sup>2</sup>

According to Krishn God is the only food-manna-with which the Soul is so placated that it never feels any hunger again. We give the name of food to accepted nutrients of the body. But God alone is the real food. And this food is brought to ripeness only by going through the four steps of baikhari, madhyama, pashyanti, and para. Some wise men have also called them name (nam), form (rup), revelation (leela), and abode (dham). At first the name is pronounced audibly. Then, gradually, the form of the adored God begins to take shape within the heart. Subsequently, the worshipper begins to view God's dalliance in his breath-how he pervades every atom of the universe and how he operates everywhere. Perception

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गमाविश्य च भूतानि धारयाम्यहमोजसा ।

पुष्णामि चौषधीः सर्वाः सोमो भूत्वा रसात्मकः ॥१३॥

अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः ।

प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम् ॥१४॥

1. The four kinds of food are bhakshya, bhojya, lehya, and chosya. That which is chewed for eating is bhakshya; that which is swallowed without chewing is bhojya; that which is licked is lehya; and that which is sucked is chosya.
2. See the exposition of twenty-ninth verse in Chapter 4.

of the works of God within the sphere of the heart is leela. Rather than enactment of folk plays based on the legends of Ram and Krishn, it is perception of the operations of God within the realm of the heart that is the true leela. And the supreme abode is reached when the touch of God begins to be felt after the perception of his operations. Knowing him thus, the worshipper comes to dwell within him. Dwelling in this abode and dwelling in the Supreme Spirit-after feeling his touch in the perfect state of transcendental recitation (paravani) are simultaneous events.

Thus, equipped with pran and apan, or shwas and prashwas, and progressing gradually through baikhari and madhyama to the culminating stage of para, the food that God is, is ready and available and also assimilated, and, of course, by then the eater of the food is ready, too, to partake of the sublime nourishment.

- 15. “Seated in the heart of all beings, I am their memory and knowledge and also the strength that overcomes all impediments; I am that which is worthy of being apprehended by the Ved; and I verily am the author of the Vedant as well as their knower.”**

Krishn exists as the omniscient presence in the heart of all beings and it is because of him that the Supreme Spirit is remembered. Memory here signifies the recalling of the forgotten essence of God. There is clearly here a representation of the moment of realization. Knowledge that comes with memory and the ability to overcome difficulties are also gifts from Krishn. He is also a fit subject for knowing by all the Ved. He, too, is the author as well as end of the Ved. Knowledge comes when he is separate, but who will know whom when the worshipper has perceived him and become one with him? Krishn is also knower of the Ved. He said at the beginning of the chapter that the world is a tree, of which the root is the God above and all of the branches below are nature. The one who can distinguish the root from the branches that are nature knows the essence of it, and he is versed in the

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सर्वस्य चाहं हृदिसंनिविष्टो मत्तःस्मृतिर्ज्ञानमपोहनं च ।

वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यो वेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम् ॥१५॥

Ved( sacred knowledge). Here he says that he is such a one-knower of the Ved. He thus puts himself on a par with other scholars of the Ved. Thus it is again stressed that Krishn was a sage who knew the truth-truly a Yogeshwar among yogi. The subject is concluded here and now he goes on to say that there are two kinds of beings (Purush).

**16 “There are two kinds of beings in the world, the mortal and the immortal: whereas the bodies of all beings are destructible, their Souls are said to be imperishable.”**

The person male or female, who has restrained his senses along with the mind, that is, whose body of senses is steady, is said to be imperishable. The “perishable” person exists today, but may not exist even tomorrow. But this too is Soul in a particular condition. There is, however, another Self beyond these two.

**17. “But higher than both of them is the one who pervades the three worlds to support and sustain all, and who is named the eternal God and Supreme Spirit (Ishwar).”**

The unmanifest God, the imperishable, and the Supreme Being are some other names by which he is known. But truly he is different and inexpressible. He represents the ultimate state beyond the mutable and the immutable (the perishable and the imperishable). He is directed by the Supreme Spirit, but he is different and beyond words. Krishn introduces himself as a Soul in such a state.

**18. “Since I am supreme by virtue of being beyond both the perishable ( body) and the imperishable (Soul), I am known as the Supreme Being ( Purushottam ) in the world as well as in the Ved.”**

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द्वामिमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च ।  
क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ॥१६॥  
उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहृतः ।  
यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य बिभर्त्यव्यय ईश्वरः ॥१७॥  
यस्मात्क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तमः ।  
अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥१८॥



He is reputed as the Supreme Being in both the world and the Ved because he has transcended the destructible, mutable kshetr and even gone higher than the immutable, imperishable, steady Soul.

**19. “The all-knowing man, who is thus aware of my essence, O Bharat, as the Supreme Being, always worships me with perfect devotion.”**

Such a worshipper is not separate from Krishn.

**20. “I have thus instructed you, O the sinless, in this most subtle of all knowledge because, O Bharat, by knowing its essence a man gains wisdom and accomplishes all his tasks.”**

Krishn thus enlightens Arjun on the most secret knowledge, by being well acquainted with the essence of which a man becomes all-knowing and gains his object. So this instruction by Krishn is a complete sacred precept in itself.

This mysterious knowledge of Krishn was most secret. He told this to only devotees. Rather than for all, it was meant only for the worthy who are spiritually ready to receive and profit by it. But when the same secret teaching is put down in black and white, and appears in the form of a book, it may seem that Krishn has imparted it to all. But in truth it is only for those who are fit to receive it. Even the manifest form of Krishn was not meant for all. But he kept nothing back from the worthy Arjun. Arjun could not have been saved if his charioteer had kept secrets from him.

This uniqueness is to be found in all accomplished sages. Ramkrishn Paramhansdev was once ecstatic. His disciples asked him for the reason. Alluding to an eminent contemporary great soul, a realized sage (who had controlled and subdued all his senses by abstract meditation), Ramkrishn said that on that day

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यो मामेवमसंमूढो जानाति पुरुषोत्तमम् ।

स सर्वविद्भजति मां सर्वभोवेन भारत ॥१९॥

इति गुह्यतमं शास्त्रमिदमुक्तं मयानघ ।

एतद्बुद्ध्वा बुद्धिमान्स्यात्कृतकृत्यश्च भारत ॥२०॥

he too had become a Paramhans like him. After a while he told the disciples who followed him aspiring-with mind, action and speech-for freedom from passion and worldly attachment, “Don’t ever be in doubt now. I am the Ram who was born in Treta. I, too, am the Krishn of Dwapar. I am their sacred Soul. I am of their form. If you have to attain, behold me.”

In precisely the same way my revered teacher used to say, “Mark you that I am but a messenger of God. Real sages are messengers of the all pervading, preeminent, changeless Supreme Spirit; and it is through them that his message is received.” Jesus Christ exhorted men to come to him, all who labour and are heavily laden, and he would give them rest by revealing to them God his Father (Matthew, 11:28). So everyone can be a son of God.<sup>3</sup> Albeit it is a different matter that going to sages is made possible only through sincere striving for the accomplishment of worship and meditation. In Surah II of the Koran, Allah reveals: “Lo! We have sent you (O Mohammad) with the truth, a bringer of glad tidings and a messenger.” The revered Maharaj Ji used to say the same about himself to all. He neither supported nor contradicted any view or doctrine; but he did tell those who earnestly craved for liberation from passions and worldly attachment: “Just look at my form. If you aspire for the ultimate Spirit, contemplate me and have no doubt.” There were many who were skeptical, but, through demonstrating by personal experience and conduct, and even by berating them, he made them give up their irrelevant assumptions among which are included the many rituals and ceremonies dwelt upon by Krishn in verses 40-43 of Chapter 2, and thus induced them to have faith in him. He exists timelessly as an accomplished sage. Likewise, although Krishn’s glory was a mystery, he revealed it to his earnest devotee, worthy and affectionate Arjun. This is possible with every worshipper and sages have thus brought millions on to the spiritual path.



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3. The Koran, Surah II, 116 : “And they say : Allah has taken unto himself a Son. Be he glorified ! Nay, but whatsoever is in the heaven and the earth is his.”

Krishn said at the beginning of the chapter that the world is a tree like the Peepal. But the Peepal is just an analogy. Its root is the God above and all nature is its branches that spread below. The one who gains awareness of the tree along with its root is well-versed in the Ved. The branches of this world-tree as well as its roots are everywhere, high and low, because it has sprung from the God whose seed-the Soul-resides within the heart of every being.

There is the myth that, seated on the lotus once, Brahma speculated over his origin. He entered the stem of the lotus from which he was born and went deeper and deeper into it. He penetrated even deeper, but he could not see the source of his birth. So in despair he resumed his seat on the lotus. Then through restraint of mind and meditation he at last discovered his fountainhead in the Supreme Spirit and extolled him, whereupon God himself revealed to him that although he exists everywhere, he can be found only within the heart. The one who contemplates him within the sphere of his heart realizes him.

Brahma is a symbol. He represents the emergence of the ideal state from the mature practice of yog. The mind that is inclined towards God and possessed of knowledge of the Supreme Spirit is Brahma. Although growing in water, the lotus is unstained and pure. When the mind wanders about in quest it does not gain its object, but seated on an immaculate seat with total self-restraint, the same mind realizes God within the heart when it reaches the stage of dissolution of that restraint itself.

Here, too, the world is a tree, whose roots and boughs are everywhere. It stands for the worldly fetters that bind only human beings in accordance with their actions. The other forms only suffer the consequences of these actions. So Krishn implores Arjun to sever this Peepal -like world with the axe of firm renunciation and seek for the supreme goal, after achieving which sages are not reborn.

As to how to know that the tree has been cut down, the Yogeshwar says that the man who is free from pride and ignorance, who has overcome the evil of attachment, whose desires have

come to an end, and who is liberated from conflicts, attains to the final beatitude. Illuminated by neither the sun nor the moon, nor by fire, the God who is the ultimate state is self-radiant. What is essential for this spiritual achievement is firm conviction that the one after approaching whom there is no reversion is the supreme abode, and that all are equally entitled to it because the embodied Soul is but an immaculate part of Krishn himself.

When the Soul gives up a body, he carries the inclinations of its mind and five senses into the new body he assumes. If the sanskar is enlightened and morally good, the Soul attains to the level of enlightenment and moral virtue. If he bears rajas-dominated sanskar, he gets through to the medium level. And if the sanskar is characterized by tamas, the Soul climbs down to birth in lower forms of life and indulges in sensual pleasures through their mind that controls the senses. This is usually not seen, for the vision that is needed to perceive it is the vision of knowledge. Just memorizing something is not knowledge. Yogi are enabled to see it only by concentrating the mind on the Self. Thus knowledge is achieved from practice and accomplishment, although it is true that study of sacred works inclines one to it. Men who are skeptical and devoid of accomplishment do not gain the desired object even though they endeavour hard for it.

Thus there is here a portrayal of the stage of realization. So it is but natural that the attributes of this stage are dwelt upon. Throwing light upon them, Krishn says that he is the light of the sun and the moon, and he is also the brightness of fire. It is his fire that accepts and assimilates the food that reaches the state of readiness by four ways. In the words of Krishn, God is the only food (such is the verdict of the Upanishad in which the idea occurs) after tasting which the Soul is fully contented. The food generated from the stage of baikhari to para is readied and consumed, and even the worshipper, the recipient of this food, ceases to exist. However, this achievement cannot be possible until there is a sage-teacher - the charioteer who restrains, guides, and prompts.

*Stressing the same point*, Krishn states that it is he who, residing in the heart of all beings, generates memory. He causes them to

recall the God who was forgotten. He is also the knowledge that comes with this memory. It is also by him that the hurdles in the way are surmounted. He alone is fit to be known and he, too, is the one who represents the end of this knowledge after it is known. And since after this point the knower and the known are one, knowledge is irrelevant, for now who is there to know and who to be known. Krishn is knower of the Ved- of the divine truth. He has said that he who knows the world-tree along with its root is versed in the knowledge of Ved, but this knowledge comes only to him who cuts down the tree. Now he says that he is knower of the Ved. He counts himself as one of those who are initiated into the wisdom of the Ved. So Krishn too is here a sage-knower of the Ved, the knowledge of which the all of mankind is entitled to.

At the end it is said that the world has three kinds of beings. All the bodies of beings are transitory, but the same being is imperishable in the state when the mind is steady, although it is subject to contradictions. And even higher than this is the transcendental God who is said to be unmanifest and eternal, and who is indeed unique. This is the being beyond transience and permanence; this is the ultimate being. As one with this being, Krishn is thus also the same-beyond the destructible and the indestructible-because of which he is known as the Supreme Being. Enlightened seekers who know the Supreme Spirit thus worship Krishn wholeheartedly. There is no anomaly in their knowledge.

It is this most (secret) knowledge that Krishn imparts to Arjun. Sages of attainment do not reveal it to all, but they also do not hide it from the deserving. If it is hidden from them, how will they achieve their object?

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**Thus concludes the Fifteenth Chapter, in the Upanishad of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta, on the Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, the Discipline of Yog, and the Dialogue between Krishn and Arjun, entitled:**

**“Purushottam Yog” or “The Yog of the Supreme Being”**

**Thus concludes Swami Adgadanand's exposition  
of the Fifteenth Chapter of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta in  
"Yatharth Geeta"**

**HARI OM TAT SAT**